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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35TH MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

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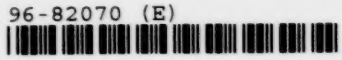

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 106: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN (continued) (A/51/41, A/51/90, A/51/306 and Add.1, A/51/385, A/51/424, A/51/456 and A/51/492)

1. Mr. BEN AMOR (Tunisia) said that his country attached particular importance to the question of the rights of the child, and had adopted a comprehensive set of measures as part of a national programme of action with objectives in accordance with the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children.

2. That policy was reflected in the 1991 ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the decision to have each year, on 11 January, a national children's holiday, and an annual prize to individuals or institutions who had made a national, regional or international contribution through their activities to the promotion of the rights of the child.

3. In terms of legislation, a children's protection code had been adopted in November 1995, under which a network of child protection officers had been established throughout the country. Further, a number of legislative instruments, including the Family Code, had been revised and harmonized with a view to strengthening the rights of the child. Lastly, a follow-up mechanism had been established with the aim, inter alia, of submitting annual reports to the Council of Ministers on the status of children so as to ensure the attainment of the objectives set forth in the national programme.

4. In terms of health services, emphasis had been placed on primary health care, mother and child health, vaccination campaigns, family planning and social protection. That policy had resulted in the eradication of child illnesses and had reduced infant mortality rates by significant percentages.

5. Nevertheless those attainments should not cause sight to be lost of the fact that throughout the world, particularly in Africa and South-East Asia, in regions affected by conflicts in particular, children lived through extremely difficult conditions day by day. In that regard his delegation supported the recommendations formulated by Ms. Graça Machel in her study on the impact of armed conflict on children, with a view to improving their plight. With regard to monitoring machinery for the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, his delegation supported the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the proposal to expand its membership.

6. Mr. HOLMES (Canada) said that while the international community had devoted laudable attention for some years to the question of the rights of the child, particularly since the convening of the World Summit for Children in 1990, much remained to be done, particularly with regard to implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Summit. It should be noted that one of the objectives established at the Summit, namely universal adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, was close to fulfilment. He expressed his delegation's appreciation for the excellent work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and urged those States which had not yet adhered to

the Convention to do so without further delay, and for States parties to work closely with the Committee on effective implementation of the Convention.

7. Canada, which attached particular importance to the question of the impact of armed conflict on children, had recently hosted an international conference to foster support for a comprehensive ban on landmines and was actively supporting a General Assembly resolution on that issue. The Canadian Government was also committed to the elaboration of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning children in armed conflicts, as well as to the appointment of a special rapporteur on the question of the impact of armed conflict on children.

8. The exploitation of children, both sexual and economic, was intolerable. Unfortunately, it had to be acknowledged, in the light of recent events and the convening in Stockholm, in August, of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, that no country was immune to such problems. Canada, which had played an active role at the Congress, had introduced legislation to punish offenders who sexually exploited children, including those who did so abroad, and, at the international level, unreservedly supported the formulation of an optional protocol to the Convention concerning the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

9. With regard to efforts to counter the economic exploitation of children, Canada continued to cooperate with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and, in particular, its international programme on the elimination of child labour, to which it had paid a contribution of $700,000. Further, Canada actively supported the elaboration of a new ILO convention on exploitative forms of child labour.

10. Mr. MAZEIKS (Latvia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. Latvia welcomed the report on the impact of armed conflict on children prepared by Ms. Graça Machel, the expert appointed by the Secretary-General, whose recommendations would guide future work in the field.

11. Latvia had taken various measures to promote the rights of the child, beginning with the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the national level, an Inter-ministerial Commission on the Rights of the Child, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, had been established. The Commission was responsible for policy formulation and implementation, while the Centre for the Protection of Children dealt with coordination of activities.

12. The problem of children as victims of armed conflict did not arise in Latvia, but the problems of street children and of violence against children were of concern. His Government was seeking to respond by emphasizing education. In Latvia, primary education was free and available in eight national minority languages. Further, a Latvian language training programme, involving state schools, was being carried out in cooperation with UNDP and the support of bilateral donors.

13. The protection of the rights of the child depended primarily on cooperation between government and civil society and on respect for the principles of international humanitarian law. Latvia welcomed the holding of the World

Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and commended the Swedish Government, the international community and non-governmental organizations which had contributed to the success of the meeting.

14. Mrs. MACHNYIKOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that the international community was increasingly aware of the gravity and extent of the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which had dramatically increased in recent years, and it must continue to mobilize to counter that trend. Efforts must be redoubled to ensure that international instruments adopted for the protection of children, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, were effectively and fully implemented. At the same time there was a need to take preventive action, provide assistance to children who were victims of abuse and promote their reintegration into society. To that end, a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach must be followed with the participation of all sectors of society. International cooperation between States and, increasingly, between non-governmental organizations, was also essential.

15. Her Government wished to be closely associated with that process. International cooperation had led to the convening of the Stockholm World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Her Government intended to analyse the problem and to develop, on the basis of the sound strategies set forth in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Congress, a plan of action as a framework for future policy. In addition to that useful work, the Czech Republic had welcomed the visit paid to it in 1996 by Ms. Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and looked forward to the report to be issued subsequent to that visit.

AGENDA ITEM 109: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.25, A/C.3/51/L.26 AND A/C.3/51/L.28)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.25: The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

16. Mr. WISSA (Egypt), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.25 on behalf of the sponsors, said that Andorra, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Senegal and Uganda had also become sponsors and that the draft contained only one change with respect to the previous year's text: the mention, in the fourth preambular paragraph, of the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. That Declaration provided a very clear framework for international cooperation to ensure peace, the equality and sovereignty of States, respect for the rights of peoples, development and justice.

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.26: Use of mercenaries as a means to violate human rights and to impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

17. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.26, said that the text was identical to the preceding year's text, but that it had been updated to reflect the new elements identified by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in his report on the use of mercenaries and

mercenary-related activities to topple sovereign Governments and to undermine the rights of peoples to self-determination despite resolution 50/138. The text drew attention to the importance of international cooperation in combating the activities of mercenaries, which had devastating effects, particularly on the young democracies of Africa. Indeed, those criminal activities constituted a form of terrorism which must be combated as vigorously as its other manifestations.

18. Mr. WISSA (Egypt) announced that his delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.26.

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.28: Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination

19. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.28 on behalf of the sponsors, and said that Djibouti had also become a sponsor. In the text, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern at the continuation of acts or threats of foreign military intervention and occupation that were threatening to suppress, or had already suppressed, the right of peoples to self-determination. The Assembly reaffirmed that the realization of that right was a fundamental condition for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights. It called upon the States responsible to cease immediately those acts and all acts of repression, discrimination, exploitation and maltreatment. It also reaffirmed the right of refugees to return to their homes voluntarily in safety and honour. Lastly, it requested the Secretary-General to report to it on that question at its fifty-second session under the item entitled "Rights of peoples to self-determination". The sponsors hoped that the text would be adopted without a vote by the Committee and by the plenary Assembly.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.17 and A/C.3/51/L.18)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.17: Violence against women migrant workers

20. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the proposed text, like the other resolutions adopted on the issue since 1992, sought to protect women migrant workers against the multiple dangers that threatened them as women, as workers and as migrants, and to defend their rights. The absence, in both sending and receiving States, of measures to protect women in that category was explained in part by the lack of information about them. In that connection, the indicators developed at the expert group meeting on violence against women migrant workers, which had been held in Manila in May 1996 and had been attended by independent experts - most of whom had come from receiving States - and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental observers, should help fill that gap.

21. She stressed that the draft resolution was not intended to make accusations against certain countries, inasmuch as employers, and not countries, were to blame for cases of violence against women migrant workers. She hoped that, as in previous years, the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.18: Traffic in women and girls

22. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.18 on behalf of the sponsors, said that Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Finland, France, Guinea-Bissau and Panama had also become sponsors and that the text had undergone many changes. She hoped that the final version, which had yet to be completed, would be adopted without a vote.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 108: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.23, A/C.3/51/L.24 and A/C.3/51/L.27)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.24: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

23. Ms. TOMIČ (Slovenia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.24 on behalf of the sponsors, and said Australia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Guatemala, Iceland, Micronesia, New Zealand, Norway and Poland had also become sponsors.

24. The draft resolution, which had been prepared jointly by the delegations of Belgium and Slovenia, was the result of the merging of two resolutions that had been adopted separately in the past: the annual resolution entitled "Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" and the biennial resolution entitled "Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination". Those resolutions had been merged to help meet the need to rationalize the work of the Committee.

25. The resolution included three operative parts, each of which was based on the relevant report which had been submitted for the consideration of the Third Committee. The first part related to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In that connection, she pointed out that the Committee had continued to improve its working methods, with the result that it no longer had a backlog of reports which had been submitted but not yet considered. In the second part of the draft, States parties were urged to accelerate their ratification procedures with regard to the amendment of the Convention that would authorize the financing of the Committee from the regular budget of the United Nations. The Convention had been widely ratified - by 148 States thus far - which was a source of satisfaction. The third part of the text requested States which had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention.

26. The current draft resolution would be submitted to the Third Committee every year, except that the third part of the text would continue to appear in the resolution based on the report submitted to the Third Committee by the Secretary-General, which was considered every two years. She was grateful to the sponsors that had supported or contributed to the drafting of the resolution, and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus, as it had always been in the past.

AGENDA ITEM 102: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9: International action to combat drug abuse and illicit production and trafficking

27. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9, whose programme budget implications had been published in document A/C.3/51/L.22. Afghanistan, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Croatia, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Philippines, Tunisia and Uzbekistan had been added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution. She asked whether any other delegations wished to become sponsors of the text.

28. Mrs. MORGAN (Mexico) announced that Bangladesh, El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Swaziland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Togo had stated their intention to become sponsors.

29. Her delegation, which had coordinated the numerous consultations on that important text, was of the view that there was unanimity on the need to hold a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the campaign against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. All delegations also agreed that the financial costs of that session had to be kept to a minimum. In that regard, the Secretariat's statement on programme budget implications contained in document A/C.3/51/L.22 was not in accordance with the provisions of draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9. Thus, the Secretariat referred to ad hoc expert groups meetings which were not mentioned in section IV of draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9 on the convening of a special session. The Secretariat should therefore review document A/C.3/51/L.22 before its consideration by the Fifth Committee in order to eliminate the activities that had not been mandated by Governments under draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9.

30. Mr. BIGGAR (Ireland) said that his delegation fully endorsed the comment that had just been made by the representative of Mexico. The financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9 must be reviewed.

31. Mr. BORDA (Colombia) fully endorsed the comments of the representative of Mexico. He drew attention to the Spanish version of the draft resolution. In section IV, paragraph 8, concerning initiatives by Member States aimed at providing inputs to the Commission on Narcotics Drugs, the words "hacer aportes" used in the Spanish version of the text were ambiguous. It should be specified that substantive inputs, and not financial inputs, were required.

32. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his delegation fully appreciated the efforts of the delegation of Mexico to achieve a consensus on the text before the Third Committee. Obviously, the fight against illicit drugs was a high priority for the United States Government. President Clinton himself had underscored the importance of the counter-narcotics effort in his statements to the General Assembly in 1995 and 1996. However, the United States had stated on many occasions that it could not support actions which had the effect of increasing the United Nations regular budget beyond the cap that had been

adopted by the General Assembly for the current biennium. His delegation recognized the validity of the comments made by the delegations of Mexico, the European Union and Colombia on the need to review the financial implications of the draft resolution. However, the document submitted by the Secretariat showed that the costs for the planned special session would have to be partially offset by the elimination of a number of programmes and initiatives mandated under the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and urgently requested by some States. His delegation had concluded from its detailed review of the Secretariat's programme budget implications that many of the imputed costs were for meetings or consulting services which were not necessary and had not been mandated by Member States. According to the document submitted by the Secretariat, expenditures in the order of $290,500 would need to be met from the contingency fund.

33. In view of the foregoing, his delegation was currently not in a position to support the draft resolution. It would reconsider its position later if the Secretariat were able to revise its programme budget implications downward, and if it were determined that costs could be accommodated fully within the Organization's regular budget ceiling.

34. Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) thanked the Mexican delegation for its role in the negotiations on the text before the Committee and endorsed the comments concerning the need to review the programme budget implications of the draft resolution. Moreover, it was regrettable that some delegations, which had actively participated in the negotiations on the text under consideration, disassociated themselves form the sponsors of the draft resolution when it was about to be adopted. The Committee was preparing to take a decision thereon. Financial reasons should not be invoked to invalidate a political decision taken by Governments.

35. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9 without a vote.

36. It was so decided.

37. Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.9 was adopted without a vote.

38. Mr. GHAMOUS (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had actively participated in the negotiations on the draft resolution which had just been adopted. It welcomed that text, which dealt with all aspects of the question of narcotic drugs.

39. He was particularly concerned about the fate of persons who were victims of the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs. In that regard, his delegation wished to make it clear that in no way should the provisions of the tenth preambular paragraph be invoked to allow those involved in such traffic to go unpunished.

AGENDA ITEM 104: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.29: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

40. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.29, which she had submitted on the basis of informal consultations. The draft resolution did not have programme budget implications. If she heard no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the text without a vote.

41. It was so decided.

42. Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.29 was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued) (A/C.3/51/L.15/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.15/Rev.1: Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

43. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.15/Rev.1, which did not have programme budget implications.

44. Ms. NEWELL (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in the Arabic version of the text, Monaco had been inadvertently listed as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution.

45. Ms. WAHBI (Sudan) said that, in the Arabic version, Morocco had not been included as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution. Moreover, the following countries had also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, Islamic Republic of Iran, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda and Zaire. At the end of paragraph 4, the words "conscious of the importance of family unity" should be inserted after the words "refugee family separation".

46. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the text without a vote.

47. It was so decided.

48. Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.15/Rev.1 was adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.